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Claiborne Elementary wins national EPA competition

BATON ROUGE – In April, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that Claiborne Elementary school in Baton Rouge won the annual Energy Star National Building Competition: *Battle of the Buildings*. Claiborne Elementary School competed with teams from more than 3,000 buildings across the country that spent the past year competing to obtain the greatest reduction in energy use. Claiborne won by cutting its energy use nearly in half.

Thursday, May 8, U.S. EPA Region 6 Administrator Ron Curry, DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch and Superintendent Bernard Taylor were at Claiborne to present Principal Stephanie Tate and the students with a certificate and a plaque memorializing their win.

As the winner, Claiborne got dramatic results by teaching students and teachers what actions they could take every day to save energy. Actions included adjusting thermostats, keeping doors and windows closed when the heat or A/C is on, turning off lights when leaving a room and making sure all electronic devices were turned off at the end of each day. The school also fine-tuned automated controls of the heating, ventilation, lighting and air conditioning systems. They made sure that lights were turned off in unoccupied area and that heating and cooling systems would run only when needed.

“DEQ encourages citizens to take individual steps to save energy and improve the environment,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “These students and teachers, and Claiborne Elementary, are a perfect example of how much the individual can do to be part of the solution. We congratulate them on the award and the effort it took to win.”

“You did something – all of you working together – that President Obama is very proud of you for doing,” EPA Administrator Curry told the assembled faculty, dignitaries and students. “You came out on top out of 3,000 and that’s amazing.”

Together, competitors in this year’s National Building Competition saved more than \$20 million and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 130,000 metric tons—equal to the annual electricity use of nearly 18,000 homes. Many organizations used the competition to involve people—such as staff and students—who might not ordinarily be engaged in such efforts.